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# CALL FOR ACTION

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The International Non-Profit Network of Consumer Hotlines



December 15, 2003

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Marlene Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, S.W. Room TW-A325  
Washington, DC 20054

RE Broadband Consumer issues—Docket No 02-33, 02-52, 03-104

Dear Madam Secretary

As Chairperson of the FCC's Consumer Advisory Committee, attached please find six copies of the recommendations of the Committee concerning Voice Over Internet Protocol consumer issues as adopted November 20, 2003. We believe that these recommendations are relevant to the subjects addressed in the above-referenced dockets. This is an Ex Parte communication filed pursuant to Sec 1.1206 of the Commission's rules.

Sincerely,

Shirley L. Rooker, Chairperson  
Consumer advisory committee

cc. Chairman Michael K. Powell

Commissioners  
Kathleen Q. Abernathy  
Michael J. Copps  
Kevin Martin  
John Adelstein

Dane Snowden, Chief of Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau

Enclosure

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**Recommendations of the Consumer Advisory Committee  
To the Federal Communications Commission  
Regarding Voice Over Internet Protocol Consumer Issues  
Submitted for the record of the VOIP Forum held December 1, 2003**

The advancements in Internet and telecommunications technology have resulted in a range of new communications services currently available to consumers. One such service, Voice Over Internet Protocol ("VOIP"), offers consumers an alternate means for originating and receiving telephone calls, routing telephone calls through the Internet instead of the telephone network.

Although this nascent service is utilized by a small number of consumers today, it has the potential to become a widely used communications service in the coming years. VOIP offers benefits to consumers, but also raises questions about the impact it will have on consumer issues. As new services, like VOIP, blur the legal distinctions between communications services, it is important to identify consumer protections that may be critical in this changing communications market.

The Consumer Advisory Committee applauds Chairman Powell's stated agenda for the upcoming VOIP Forum and subsequent NPRM to "explore the best means to achieve important health, safety and welfare policy objectives such as E911, universal service and homeland security. "We urge the Commission to also pay close attention to the additional issue of access for people with disabilities.

We stress that these consumer protections can and should be addressed regardless of the ultimate regulatory treatment of VOIP.

The mission of the Consumer Advisory Committee is to make recommendations to the Commission regarding consumer issues within the jurisdiction of the Commission and to facilitate the participation of consumers (including people with disabilities and underserved populations, such as Native Americans and persons living in rural areas) in proceedings before the Commission.

Adopted: November 20, 2003

Respectfully submitted:  
Shirley L. Rooker, Chairperson  
Consumer Advisory Committee